

BALLOT  
QUESTIONS  
SPECIMEN  
BALLOT




Cambridge  
November 2, 2021

*Edmund Langford*  
*Cheryl*  
*Wheeler*

Election Commissioners

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

To vote on the following questions, fill in the oval next to your choice, like this  using a black pen.

If you spoil this ballot, return it for cancellation to the election officer in charge of the ballots and get another from such officer.

The City Council has proposed making three changes to the City's Plan E Charter, which is the law that prescribes the structure of the Cambridge government. The Charter sets forth the powers of the City Council and the City Manager.

The City Council voted on June 28, 2021, as amended on September 20, 2021 to correct a minor clerical issue, that three charter amendments shall be submitted to the voters at the election on November 2, 2021 in the following form:

**Question 1** Should amendments to the City’s Plan E Charter, Section 105 of Chapter 43, be made providing for the City Council to confirm appointments of the City Manager to the City’s boards and commissions, which confirmation is not currently required?

**Summary of proposal:** The City Council’s first proposed change would amend the City’s Plan E Charter at General Laws Chapter 43, Section 105 by adding the following:

“The City Manager shall refer to the City Council and simultaneously file with the Clerk the name of each person the City Manager desires to appoint or reappoint as a member of a board or commission. Appointment of a member of a board or commission made by the City Manager will be effective upon a majority vote of the city council, which vote shall occur within 60 days after the date on which notice of the proposed appointment was filed with the City Clerk. The appointment may be approved or rejected by a majority of the full City Council before 60 days. An appointment or reappointment shall take effect if the City Council fails to act within those 60 days.”

This proposed change would limit the City Manager’s existing Charter power to make appointments to the City’s many boards and commissions by adding a requirement to the Charter that each appointment and re-appointment by the City Manager to boards and commissions be subject to approval by a majority vote of the City Council. Just a few examples of the boards and commissions that this change would affect are the Planning Board, the Board of Zoning Appeal, the Historical Commission, the Human Rights Commission, and the Conservation Commission. The City Manager’s proposed appointments and re-appointments would take effect without City Council approval if the City Council fails to act by either approving or rejecting a proposed appointment or re-appointment within 60 days.

YES

NO

**Question 2** Should amendments to the City’s Plan E Charter be made providing for the City Council to establish a process for an annual review of the City Manager’s performance?

**Summary of proposal:** The City Council’s second proposed change would amend the City’s Plan E Charter at General Law Chapter 43, Section 116 by adding the following as a new Section 116(a):

“Annually the City Council shall prepare and deliver to the City Manager a written review of the City Manager’s performance in a manner provided by ordinance.”

This proposed change to the City Charter would require the City Council to enact an ordinance that would require an annual written review of the City Manager’s performance. Pursuant to the existing Charter, the City Council is the hiring and firing authority of the City Manager, but the City Council is not required to prepare an annual written performance review of the City Manager. If this Charter change is adopted, the City Council would be required to establish a process by ordinance that would prescribe the manner by which the City Council would be required to perform an annual written performance review of the City Manager.

YES

NO

**Question 3** Should amendments to the City’s Plan E Charter be made providing for the City Council to establish a process for review every 10 years to be made of the City’s Plan E Charter by an appointed committee of voters per city council ordinance?

**Summary of proposal:** The City Council’s third proposed change would amend the City’s Plan E Charter at General Laws Chapter 43, Section 116 by adding the following as a new Section 116(b) or, if Question 2 fails, by adding a new Section 116(a.):

“Not later than July 1, in each year ending in a 2, the City Council shall provide for a review to be made of the city charter by a special committee to be established by ordinance. All members of the special committee shall be voters of the city not holding elective office. The special committee shall file a report with the City Council within 1 year of its appointment recommending any changes to the city charter which it deems necessary or desirable, unless an extension is authorized by vote of the City Council. Action on any proposed charter changes shall be as authorized by the Massachusetts constitution or general laws.”

This change to the City Charter would require that the City Council enact an ordinance that provides for a review of the Charter by a committee of City voters, none of whom could hold elective office, every ten years beginning in 2022. The appointed committee would file a report with the City Council within one year of its appointment unless the City Council extended the one-year period, recommending any changes to the Charter which the committee deemed necessary or desirable. The committee would not have the authority to actually make the Charter changes it might propose. Action on any proposed Charter changes could only be taken subject to Massachusetts law governing how Charter changes may be enacted.

YES

NO